

AN EPISCOPALIAN UNDERSTANDING OF EPISKOPE AND EPISCOPACY

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One: Preliminary Considerations

I am honored to be invited to address this ongoing consultation that is involved in the arduous task of preparing for the ecumenical reunion of our two churches. Two churches, I should add, that many of us are convinced belong together both because of our common origin and also because of our common purpose. Two churches, as Archbishop Rowan Williams has recently remarked, that are preparing and yearning for that "one day when we shall be led, in both thankfulness and repentance, to share with one another what we have learned apart; to bring to one another a history not without its shadows and stresses, but still one in which something quite distinctive has been learned." When I was kindly invited to offer a presentation for this gathering, it was understood that I would have to be entering from the outside, in medias res as it were, only to depart after this meeting is over, and that I would of course have to draw largely upon my other work on episcopacy in other contexts and with other churches and try to "make it fit," and this is what I have done.

It is also obvious that there are many ways to define a topic for a session such as this, as is evident from the single word "Episcope" that appears by my name on the minutes of your last planning session when compared to the fuller title appearing by my name on the draft agenda that I have only recently received: "how churches have maintained faithfulness to apostolic faith through the historic episcopate." Such a title is well and good, of course, but one has to add from the outset that our churches should also be faithful to mission (even to common mission, as the Lutherans were right to insist in their dialogue with us). Also we should be faithful to Biblical faith, as many in our churches would protest, or faithful to the Gospel, as many others would put it, or faithful to the mind and intelligence and reason that God has given us, as many prophetic voices would say, or faithful to the Holy Tradition, as churches whose membership is far larger than Methodism or Anglicanism would express the church's purpose. Yes, words do matter, and there is much involved in choosing them. At the other end of my announced topic, also, many of us would also want to point out that the historic episcopate is only one means, albeit a very important one, to maintain that faithfulness, but that other means to facilitate such faithfulness must also include prayer and worship, study of the Scriptures and of theology, the practice of love and charity and the other virtues, and so on.

Still another preliminary consideration that must be noted here is that both our churches are ongoing members of something now called "Churches Uniting in Christ," and in that context we may soon be called upon to consider seriously a document proposing a way forward to the reconciliation of ordained ministries in the context of an agreement for full communion among nine of us. That document is not quite ready yet in its final form for public release, and debate and evaluation by our churches, but it too will affect how we see such things as historic episcopacy, and as one member of the team that has been drafting it I can only say that I wish it

were ready for our open consideration at this present meeting. But it is not, so for the time being we must be content to prepare the way, and to try to understand our own selves better.

And so, after the foregoing preliminary considerations, I turn to my task at hand and propose to offer a paper in two more sections, the former consisting of my own study of episcopacy in the early church that evolved from my part in the Moscow Consultation on Episcopacy with representative theologians and historians of the Russian Orthodox Church in August of 1992; and the latter consisting of my description of episcopacy and the historic episcopate as I believe them to be generally understood in the Episcopal Church today, prepared over the last two decades for various audiences including my students in early church history and my many and long-suffering friends within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Two: The Early Church

To most thoughtful persons in the Episcopal Church, probably in most churches, to be "faithful to the apostolic faith through the historic episcopate" must involve a faithfulness, in some sense, to the theology and practice of episcopacy as that evidence has come down to us from the early church, and in this sense "the early church" or "the apostolic faith" must also include the Biblical evidence as well. Yet before we plunge directly into the early evidence from my Moscow paper of 1992, I must remark upon how difficult it is to be "faithful to Scripture" and I shall cite just one example related to episcopacy. Let us take 1 Timothy 3:2, "Now a bishop must be the husband of one wife" (RSV) or "A Bishop must be married only once" (NRSV). But any intelligent person should know that to be faithful to the Biblical evidence here, one must be faithful to the text of the Greek New Testament, which reads (in transliteration) "mias gunaikos andra." And this can in fact be translated and interpreted in many ways, and has been given many different meanings by various scholars and various churches. This simple little statement from the Bible can mean:

A Bishop must be a married man.

A Bishop must be a married man, still married and not divorced.

A Bishop must have been or be a married man, or if divorced cannot be remarried.

A Bishop whose wife has died may not marry again.

A Bishop, whether a married man or a remarried man, can not have more than one wife at any one time, i.e. can not be a bigamist.

A Bishop can not be celibate or remarried.

A Bishop can be either celibate/unmarried, or married, but if married must not be divorced or remarried.

A Bishop must be a husband and not a wife.

A Bishop must be a man and not a woman.

A Bishop, whether man or woman, must be the head of a family.

A Bishop, whether man or woman, must be married (Whether to a woman or a man?).

A Bishop can be a man or woman but, if married, may not be divorced or remarried.

A Bishop, if married, must be a man who is not divorced or remarried, but if not married can be a woman or a man.

The mind boggles at all this, and of course you can add additional possibilities of your own

making. In fact, in protestant churches that have Bishops, such as The Episcopal Church, this tends to be what happens. Each person, especially each clergyperson who is already a Bishop or who aspires to episcopacy tends to construct meanings to this passage of Scripture that include themselves but rule out other categories that they want to exclude in their own little world, and then they defend their interpretation by replying that it is obvious to any sensible person!

But in ecumenical dialogue, what happens to this verse when its meaning is sought from the largest churches of the world? What interpretations do the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches give? Here the range of interpretation is much narrower because the one meaning on which they both agree is that the Bishop must be male and celibate. Just think of it: If we start with a verse from Scripture that says "a bishop must be the husband of one wife," if we wish to be faithful to Scripture and to the apostolic faith about this verse, the largest church in the world says it means that the Bishop must NOT be the husband of one wife, or indeed of any wife. Clever modern interpreters in the Roman Church will hasten to point out that such an interpretation is only by canon law, which the Pope (defined as "the lawgiver" in the official Code of Canon Law in that church) has the power to change, but then the question must be pressed, why elevate such an exclusion of married persons from episcopal office into an absolute rule if it is not clearly stipulated in Scripture and if the plain literal meaning of Scripture seems to say just the opposite? How can a church be faithful to the apostolic faith through the historic episcopate if most of its own bishops are living in contradiction to the plain meaning of Scripture by being married? After all, Scripture does not say merely that a bishop must be the husband of one wife or, if he prefers, can be married! Or, if he prefers, can be divorced and re-married! Now in the Orthodox churches the interpretations of 1 Timothy 3:2 tend to be a bit more relaxed than in the Roman Catholic Church, since the Orthodox allow priests to marry, and also permit formerly married priests whose wives have died to become bishops. In fact, clever modern interpreters of this scriptural verse in the Orthodox tradition place an entirely different meaning upon it, when they say the verse means that a Bishop can not be translated to another diocese. Yes, Orthodox theologians have actually told me that this is what the passage clearly means, for a celibate male priest, by consecration to the historic episcopate is actually married to his diocese and may not be translated to another. Although here too there are procedures even in Orthodox canon law that enable one to get around such restrictions.

Well, these were some of the questions that actually came up in the discussion of episcopacy as a means of being faithful to apostolic faith in our 1992 dialogue with the Russian Orthodox. But the apostolic faith, of course, means much more than merely following the celibacy of Jesus, who presumably chose not to marry and whose human life, we all believe (don't we?), points the way for us to live for others, even for God, rather than for our own narrow pleasures. So I now offer for this group the paper that I presented in that dialogue of 1992, which could be re-titled for today as an account of the place of historic episcopacy in the apostolic faith, to which we all seek to be faithful.

1. Pre-Christian Antecedents: a) Jewish and b) Gentile

The word "Bishop" itself comes from the Greek words "*epi*" meaning "over" and "*skopos*" meaning "seer," and so an "*episkopos*" is literally an "over-seer" or a "superintendent" or even an "inspector" (or, in medieval Latin sources, a "speculator"). Attempts have often been made to find prototypes of the Christian "Bishop" in the Jewish or Gentile backgrounds of

Christianity.

We consider first the Jewish, where we find that some have derived the office from that of the ruler of the Jewish synagogue, who presided over the synagogue worship and selected those who took part in its services. In the Septuagint, or Greek, version of the Old Testament (cf. Job 20:29, Wisdom of Solomon 1:6), as also commonly in Philo the Hellenized Jew of Alexandria, the term *episkopos* is used of God, but also in a number of instances of ordinary "overseers," and yet never of cultic persons. Philo gives the title once to Moses, and in First Maccabees the word is used of the inspectors set over the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes to carry out his religious policy. More recently, the discoveries of the Qumran manuscripts near the Dead Sea have raised again the possible Jewish origin of such an officer, known by the Hebrew word "*mebaqqer*." The Damascus Document describes such an . overseer or inspector of the camp, who taught the works of God to the members of the covenant community, looked after them "as does a shepherd his flock," and supervised the admission of new members, the discipline of offenders, and all financial transactions. Likewise in the Manual of Discipline from Qumran, the same sort of officer appears, comparable to the "steward" of the Essene community that is noted by Josephus. Whether or not there is any direct relationship between the overseer of these communities and the office of bishop in the early Christian church cannot be determined for certain. It does seem the case, however, that the "*mebaqqer*" of the Dead Sea documents is, if anything, even more "monarchical" than the "*episkopos*" of the New Testament texts, and for this reason, if for no other, the connection seems remote.

Any possible connections with a Gentile background, though, are even more remote than the Jewish ones. The term "*episkopos*" is fairly common in Greek literature, papyri, and inscriptions, both in its general meaning of "oversight" and as a technical name for officials, both civil and religious. In the works of Homer and others after him, it is applied to the gods. Stoic philosophers used the term to describe their own mission as messengers and heralds of the gods. Syrian inscriptions record "*episkopoi*" as overseers of buildings, provisions and coinage, and cultic associations of Greece and the Aegean isles record the term in reference to directors and cashiers.

I think one must say in concluding this first section that the pre-Christian evidence, both Jewish and Gentile, although enlightening, is not determinative for the early Christian understanding.

2. The New Testament Evidence

Turning next to the New Testament evidence, and following lines of interpretation established by the late Professor Massey H. Shepherd 1, we find seven key references, generally dating from the turn of the first century: I Timothy 3: 1-7, Titus 1: 7 -9, I Peter 2:25, Philippians 1:1, Acts 20:28, Acts 1:20, and I Peter 5:2-4. We now look at these passages in detail, citing the translations of the Revised Standard Version:

1. I Timothy 3:1-7: "If anyone aspires to the office of a bishop ("the office of oversight"), he desires a noble task. Now a bishop must be above reproach, married only once ("*mias gunaikos andra*" = "the husband of one wife"), temperate, sensible, dignified, hospitable, an apt teacher, no drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and no lover of money. He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way; for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may be puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil; moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, or he may fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

This passage is followed by a parallel statement of diaconal qualifications and duties in I Timothy 3:8-13, which repeats some qualifications but not others and treats deacons in the plural although the bishop was referenced in the singular.

St. Augustine of Hippo in the early fifth century, commenting on the author's meaning in this passage, says: "He wanted to explain what 'episcopate' means: it is the name of a task, not an honor. It is, in fact, a Greek word, derived from the fact that a man who is put in authority over others 'superintends' them, that is, he has responsibility for them. For the Greek '*skopos*' means 'intention' (in the sense of 'direction of the intention'); and so we may, if we wish, translate '*episkopein*' as 'super-intend'. Hence a 'bishop' who has set his heart on a position of eminence rather than an opportunity for service should realize that he is no bishop." (*City of God* 19:19).

2. Titus 1:7-9: "A bishop, as God's steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of goodness, master of himself, upright, holy, and self-controlled; he must hold firm to the sure word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confront those who contradict it."

We note that both these passages from the Pastoral Letters are statements of the qualifications and duties of a bishop, in doctrinal and moral terms but with no mention of any sacramental duties. The former passage, from I Timothy, assumes that the bishop will be a man, and one who is married. Mandatory celibacy is clearly ruled out, although one might stretch the meaning of the passage to allow optional celibacy in some instances.

3. In I Peter 2:25, the term "*episkopos*" is used as a title of Christ: "You were straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian (the King James Version translates this literally as "bishop") of your souls." This passage may also be compared to the Septuagint Greek translation of Wisdom 1 :6, where God is called the "*episkopos* of man's heart."

4. Philippians 1:1: "Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus. To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." As in I Timothy 3, we note the close association of bishops with deacons.

5. Acts 20:28, in a speech attributed to Paul: "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians (the King James Version translates this as "overseers"), to feed the church of the Lord which he obtained with his own blood."

We note that this passage is addressed to those who were previously designated as the "*presbyteroi*" of the church of Ephesus; hence, the terms "*presbyteros*" and "*episkopos*" are interchangeable here.

There are also two significant New Testament instances where forms of the word other than the noun are used:

6. Acts 1:20: "It is written in the Book of Psalms [109:8], 'Let his habitation become desolate, and let there be no one to live in it'; and 'His office (King James translates literally as 'bishopric') let another take'." Here the reference is to the 'overship' forfeited by Judas' treachery and suicide, after which Judas was replaced as a member of the Twelve.

7. I Peter 5:2 -4: "Tend the flock of God that is in your charge, [exercising the oversight] (not in the earliest or best manuscripts, but the King James version does include it, translating as 'oversight') not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd is manifested, you will obtain the unfading crown of glory. "

As an exhortation to the elders ("*presbyteroi*"), this passage, as also Acts 20:28, is a second

example of the interchangeability of the terms "*episkopos*" and "*presbyteros*" in the New Testament evidence. (The two are also interchangeable in First Clement, written about 96 A.D., for whom the ministerial function of the 'presbyters' is '*episkope*'.)

In terms of recent ecumenical agreements that are related to this New Testament evidence, we note first the Lima Statement from the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches (BEM, 1982): "A ministry of *episkope* is necessary to express and safeguard the unity of the body. Every church needs this ministry of unity in some form..." (Ministry, para. 23).

Second, we note the Canterbury Statement on Ministry and Ordination from the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (1976): "The early churches may well have had considerable diversity in the structure of pastoral ministry, though it is clear that some churches were headed by ministers who were called '*episcopoi*' and '*presbyteroi*.' While the first missionary churches were not a loose aggregation of autonomous communities, we have no evidence that 'bishops' and 'presbyters' were appointed everywhere in the primitive period. The terms 'bishop' and 'presbyter' could be applied to the same man or to men with identical or very similar functions. Just as the formation of the canon of the New Testament was a process incomplete until the second half of the second century, so also the full emergence of the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter, and deacon required a longer period than the apostolic age. Thereafter this threefold structure became universal in the Church." (Para. 6.)

And in the same statement, we read: "An essential element in the ordained ministry is its responsibility for 'oversight' ('*episkope*'). This responsibility involves fidelity to the apostolic faith, its embodiment in the life of the Church today, and its transmission to the Church of tomorrow. Presbyters are joined with the bishop in his oversight of the church and in the ministry of the word and the sacraments; they are given authority to preside at the Eucharist and to pronounce absolution. Deacons, although not so empowered, are associated with bishops and presbyters in the ministry of word and sacrament, and assist in oversight." (Para 9.)

With the completion of this survey from the evidence of the New Testament, we shall now turn to the witness of the early church fathers, and here we shall discern in them, in common with the study of Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia (formerly Timothy Ware)² and with the address to the bishop-elect on page 517 of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church, three separate and complementary, but not contradictory emphases in the ministry of bishops in the early church: the bishop as president of the Eucharist (in Sts. Ignatius and Hippolytus), the bishop as teacher of the faith (in St. Irenaeus), and the bishop as leader in the councils of the church (in St. Cyprian).

3. The Witness of St. Ignatius of Antioch and St. Hippolytus of Rome to the Bishop as President of the Eucharist and Provider of the Sacraments

When we come to the writings of St. Ignatius of Antioch, c. 107 A.D., we encounter directly the emergence of the monepiscopate at the head of a threefold ministerial office, a development that can be fully explained by none of the surviving documents of the post-apostolic age. Not only does Ignatius make the presbyters or elders, no less than the deacons, subordinate to the bishop, but he is also the first clear witness to the monepiscopate (also called, perhaps misleadingly, the "monarchical" episcopate), that is, the phenomenon of a single bishop presiding as authoritative leader over the entire Christian community in any given city or place. How far one can generalize from the evidence he presents is certainly a question, and it has been suggested that at Alexandria the collegial system of presbyter-bishops may have survived well into the third century, but he does reflect the situation as it was in Syria and Asia Minor at the beginning of the second Christian century.

Ignatius was only rediscovered in the Christian West, and his letters identified and translated in the seventeenth century, thanks to the work of the Anglican Bishops Ussher and Pearson. Their work on Ignatius, in fact, soon persuaded the Church of England to adopt a "higher" doctrine of the episcopate, that is, no longer as merely "*bene esse*" in a strict parity with the ministries of non-episcopal churches but rather the concept of episcopacy as being even of "divine right" (over against the Puritans). It is not hard to detect their influence in the English Act of Uniformity, 1662, which made episcopal ordination to the priesthood a virtual and invariable necessity for incumbency of all benefices in the Church of England. 3

"With Ignatius, we have the first clear evidence, as we do not have in the New Testament, of a threefold church order of bishops, presbyters, and deacons (in order, 1-2-3), mentioned together no less than twelve times in five of his seven letters. For Ignatius, all three, bishops and presbyters and deacons, are "appointed according to the will of Jesus Christ" (Philadelphians, preface), and the three even seem to have titles of a hierarchical sort: the bishop is "*axiotheos*" (godly), the presbyters "*axioi*" (worthy), and the deacon "*syndoulos*" (fellow servant) (Mag. 2, d. Smyrn. 12). Ignatius always puts the three in this same order, at times relating them to the unity of the church and its one Eucharist (Phil. 4), and he often portrays the three offices as representatives or antitypes of heavenly realities. His most common analogies, or symbolic correspondences, are between the bishop and God the Father, between presbyters and the apostolic council, and between deacons and Jesus Christ (Mag. 6, Trall. 3). In two other places, though, it is the bishop who is analogous to Jesus Christ (Mag. 3, Eph. 3), and in one place the parallel is of the presbytery with Jesus Christ's "law," to which the deacon must submit (Mag. 2). The presbyters or elders, moreover, function for Ignatius as something of a college under the presidency of the one bishop. There is "one bishop together with the presbyters and the deacons my fellow servants," he remarks (Phil. 4), and elsewhere he likens the relation of the presbyters to the bishop "as the strings to a musical instrument" (Eph. 4).

The bishop is for Ignatius the center of the church's unity in every given place and community, and as such Ignatius expects the bishop to be obeyed. We should "be subject to the bishop as to Jesus Christ," he urges, and "we should look on the bishop as the Lord himself" (Trall. 2, Eph. 6). The bishop presides "in God's place" (Mag. 6), and so, without the bishop, there can be no Eucharist and no church. He writes: "Avoid divisions, as the source of evils. Let all of you follow the bishop as Jesus Christ did the Father. ...Let no one do any of the things that concern the church without the bishop. Let that Eucharist be considered valid which is held under the bishop, or under someone whom he appoints. VWherever the bishop appears, there let the people be, just as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic church. It is not lawful either to baptize or to hold an '*agape*' without the bishop. VWhatever he approves is also pleasing to God...He who honors the bishop is honored by God. He who does anything without the bishop's knowledge is serving the devil." (Smyrn. 8).

Insofar as any texts of Ignatius indicate his views of what would later come to be called "apostolic succession," he presents what Metropolitan John Zizioulas has called an "eschatological approach to apostolic continuity," as the future end is anticipated even now in the church's eucharistic structure under episcopal presidency (cf. Mag. 6)4. Ignatius says little else about "apostolic succession," which we do find in a rudimentary form in his contemporary Clement of Rome and in a more developed way in Tertullian and St. Irenaeus of Lyons almost a century later. He says nothing about ordination, for which the first clear evidence is Hippolytus nearly a century later, nor does he present Holy Orders as being "sequential" or "cumulative," that is, the "lower" being a prerequisite for the "higher." Overall, for Ignatius the bishop is the one

who presides over the eucharistic unity of each local church, an emphasis that has been made well known in this century by the Russian theologian Nicolas Manassieff. 5

The church, in Ignatius' view, is essentially eucharistic by nature: there is an organic relation between the Body of Christ understood as community, and the Body of Christ understood as sacrament. For Ignatius, then, the bishop is not primarily a teacher or administrator, but the one who presides at, and as "*episkopos*" watches over, the eucharistic liturgy. The presidency of the Eucharist can be designated by the bishop to one or more selected presbyters, although for Ignatius bishops and presbyters are not interchangeable (as they were in the First Epistle of Clement, c. 96 A.D.). In a typical passage Ignatius writes: "Take care to participate in one Eucharist, for there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup for union with his blood, one altar, just as there is one bishop together with the presbyters and the deacons my fellow servants" (Phil. 4). His emphasis upon the Eucharist as the focus of the church's unity, and of the centrality of the bishop's eucharistic ministry within the one church, is seen here in his repetition of the word "one," as Ware (p. 4) has observed: "one Eucharist...one flesh...one cup...one altar...one bishop." So there is one bishop, one eucharistic Body, and one church, all three being interdependent. The theme recurs constantly in his writings: "Let there be one prayer in common, one supplication, one mind, one hope in 10ve...Hasten all to come together as to one temple of God, as to one altar, to one Jesus Christ, who came forth from the one Father, is with the one Father, and departed to the one Father" (Mag. 7).

The context of the emphasis on unity in Ignatius, of course, must be kept in mind. Ignatius is writing at a time when there was probably only one bishop for any city and also no more than one eucharistic assembly for any city, a situation which greatly reinforced the bishop's function as the visible focus of unity, not as a distant administrator and occasional visitor but as the local chief pastor whom all the people saw at least every Sunday at the Eucharist. And it was not yet a time of assistant bishops (suffragans, auxiliaries, coadjutors), as are now common in virtually every church that is episcopally ordered, nor of titular bishops, as are frequently encountered in the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches, nor of overlapping episcopal jurisdictions, which are found, in contradiction of the eighth canon of the first Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.), in these churches as well as occasionally in the Anglican Communion. Even in the Holy City of Jerusalem, where in March of 1992 this present essay was written, as late as the end of the fourth century the pilgrim woman Egeria found that, despite the large numbers of pilgrims as well as local resident Christians, there was still as a rule only one Eucharist on each Sunday or feast, celebrated by the one bishop of Jerusalem and attended by everyone (*Travels*, 24-43).

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To explain the transition from the earlier evidence, and more especially from the interchangeability of episcopate and presbyterate that we find in Acts 20 and I Peter 5 and in I Clement to the fully developed moniscopate at the head of a threefold ministerial office that we find in Ignatius and later in Hippolytus, scholars have advanced two contrasting interpretations: 1) that the episcopate arose by elevation from the presbyterate, or 2) that the presbyterate evolved by delegation from the episcopate.

The former interpretation is the classic hypothesis of the Anglican Bishop J.R Lightfoot: that originally "bishops" and "presbyters" or "elders" were synonymous terms, but that the episcopate arose out of the presbyterate by "elevation" into a distinct and higher order and thus, by implication, the "original" ministry of the church was presbyteral rather than episcopal. Adolf von Harnack and R.H. Streeter also inclined to this interpretation, the former emphasizing a

process of localization and the latter suggesting a stage of collective or collegial episcopate in some places before the moniscopate was fully established. The interpretation that the episcopate arose by elevation from the presbyterate, both offices being originally synonymous and interchangeable, was also, with slightly differing emphasis, the position of St. Jerome, who in the fifth century wrote: "A presbyter...is the same as a bishop, and before ambition entered into religion by the devil's instigation and people began to say 'I belong to Paul, I to Apollos, I to Cephas,' the churches were governed by the council of presbyters, acting together." (Commentary on Titus 1:6-7.)

The other view, that the presbyterate evolved by delegation from the episcopate, maintains that there was an original distinction between the office of bishop and that of presbyter or elder, admitting that (some) bishops may also have been numbered among the presbyterate but stressing that the bishops were presbyters/elders specifically appointed/ordained for liturgical and pastoral functions of oversight and holding that not all presbyters/elders were bishops. In this view, the presbyterate was a position of honor, not of ministerial office, although in time, with the rise of the moniscopate, presbyters/elders had certain ministerial functions of a liturgical and pastoral nature delegated to them by the bishops. R. Sohm and W. Lowrie, among others, have inclined to this latter interpretation, concluding that the presbyterate as an order of ministry and not merely a title of honor or seniority came into being by delegation from the episcopate.

The Anglican tradition has generally held to the second of these interpretations at least since the mid-seventeenth century, influenced as it has been to a "higher" view of the distinctiveness and necessity of episcopal office, in part, by the rediscoveries of the epistles of Ignatius of Antioch and Clement of Rome in the seventeenth century (and of Hippolytus still later). This transition in understanding of the episcopate can be seen from a very interesting perspective in the changes of Scriptural texts appointed for the ordination rites of the Church of England before and after 1662 and for the Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. before and after its Prayer Book of 1979.⁶ Before the revised Ordinal of 1662, the Church of England used the passage we have examined from I Timothy 3, which speaks of the qualifications and duties of a bishop ("*episkopos*"), as the Epistle to be read liturgically in the rites for *both* priesthood and episcopate, thus suggesting no distinction between the two, and allowed the passage from Acts 20, which uses the term "bishops" but implies an interchangeability with presbyters, as the alternative Epistle in the rite for ordination to the priesthood. In the Ordinal of 1662, however, which was revised to show clearly the episcopate as a separate and distinct order, an entirely different passage (Ephesians 4: 7 -13, which has no mention of bishops) was substituted for I Timothy 3 in the rite for priesthood and the reading from Acts 20 was transferred to the rite for ordination to the episcopate. Even two of the three alternative Gospels in the pre-1662 rite for priesthood, Matthew 28:18-20 and John 20:19-23, both of which contain commissions to the Apostles, were transferred to the rite for the episcopate, presumably to show that bishops and not priests were the successors of the Apostles. And in the 1979 Prayer Book ordinal of the Episcopal Church in the U.S.A., the passage from I Timothy 3 was retained as the Epistle for the episcopate and that from Ephesians 4 for the priesthood, and the ambiguous passage from Acts 20 is gone altogether. The passage from John 20 is now the first choice for the Gospel, and the passage from Matthew 28 is gone altogether, presumably because its text is later and doubtful.

...

Nearly a century following St. Ignatius, the next major block of evidence about the episcopate is found in the *Apostolic Tradition* of St. Hippolytus, the conservative/traditional bishop or presbyter of Rome, which is generally dated to about 210 A.D. and is very similar to Ignatius in

its emphasis upon the bishop as president of the Eucharist and provider of the sacraments. Hippolytan authorship of this treatise, which contains the earliest ordination rites known in church history and is the earliest surviving document to look anything like a book of common prayers, was firmly established by R.H. Connolly in 1916 on the basis of further manuscript discoveries in the late nineteenth century. The definitive text is now that of the Roman Catholic scholar Bernard Botte, although in English the text is best known in translations by Anglicans Gregory Dix (which is overly complicated), B.S. Easton (which is oversimplified) and GJ. Cuming (which is the most helpful).

Comparing Hippolytus to Ignatius, we find certain similarities and other differences. Similar to Ignatius, we find in Hippolytus a full threefold order headed by the monepiscopate, bishops and presbyters not interchangeable, and the three orders not prescribed as cumulative. In contrast to Ignatius, however, we find in Hippolytus the popular election of bishops ("chosen by all the people") and a succession that is established on the basis of ordination by episcopal laying-on-of-hands, as well as the principle that it is the bishop alone who ordains. [Canon 4 of the first ecumenical council, Nicaea I, in 325, will state for the first time that three bishops are necessary for episcopal ordination or consecration.] Hippolytus' stipulation "Let the bishop be ordained after he has been chosen by all the people" clearly excludes any appointment of bishops "from above," such as by secular authority, or by a synod of bishops, or by a patriarch, or by a Pope. For Hippolytus the ordination of a bishop is to take place on a Sunday, the descent of the Spirit is invoked, and the new bishop is described in terms of "high priesthood" with authority to remit sins (which implies, at least possibly, authority to admit to eucharistic communion). The bishop is also shown as presiding at the Eucharist and at Christian initiation, as ordaining presbyters and deacons, as consecrating the three holy oils, as appointing some minor officers, and as taking a lead in daily instruction and in giving various blessings.

The rediscovery and authentication of the text of Hippolytus seems to have been the principal influence leading to the affirmation of the Roman Catholic Church, made at the Second Vatican Council, that the episcopate is the primary order of ministry constituting the fullness of the sacrament of holy orders (a view which Anglicans have generally held since the seventeenth century).⁷ By this decision, the Roman Catholic Church in effect moved from the first interpretation of the evidence of St. Ignatius noted above to the second, and in the new (1968) Roman Pontifical, the ordination prayer for a bishop is paraphrased from that of Hippolytus, as is the same prayer in the new (1979) ordinal of The Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church. Both of these recently revised prayers for the ordination of a bishop, therefore (but not that of the Church of England), are now paraphrased from the same Hippolytan prototype, the earliest ordination prayer known in the church's history.

Hippolytus' concept of succession, also, is most clearly stated in his *Refutation of All Heresies* (I, Proemium): "None will refute these [errors], save the Holy Spirit bequeathed unto the Church, which the Apostles, having in the first instance received, have transmitted to those who have rightly believed. But we, as being their successors, and as participators in this grace, high-priesthood, and office of teaching, as well as being reputed guardians of the Church, must not be found deficient in vigilance, or disposed to suppress correct doctrine."

4. The Witness of St. Irenaeus of Lyons to the Bishop as Teacher of the Apostolic Faith

When we turn to St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons c. 185-200 A.D., we find the bishop presented primarily as the link between each local church and the teaching of the apostles. Irenaeus generally echoes the eucharistic teaching of Ignatius, remarking that "Our opinion agrees with the Eucharist and the Eucharist confirms our opinion" (*Adversus Haereses* IV:18.5), but his

greater emphasis is upon apostolic doctrine. Because of his confrontation with the Gnostics, Irenaeus attaches particular importance to the continuity of church teaching and its relationship to apostolic tradition and apostolic authority. Whereas the Gnostics had appealed to a secret tradition handed down by a hidden succession of teachers, Irenaeus answered by appealing to an apostolic tradition that had been openly proclaimed in the four canonical gospels and openly taught in the unbroken public succession of bishops seated upon the episcopal throne or chair in each local church, especially in those churches of known apostolic foundation. [The bishop was thus seated, as was still the custom of teachers in that day and on until St. John Chrysostom began the custom of standing to preach.] Irenaeus is thus a contrast to Ignatius, who had very little to say about the bishop as preacher and teacher of the faith and very little to say about the bishop as the link between the church of the apostles and that of his own day. Whereas for Ignatius the bishop's "cathedra" or throne was the chair upon which he sits at the Eucharist, for Irenaeus it is far closer to the chair of a professor: "The throne is the symbol of teaching," he says (*Demonstration*, 2). And while for Ignatius the bishop is primarily the one who unites us around the Eucharist, for Irenaeus the bishop is above all the one who teaches the one truth, by which unity is preserved. "Having received this preaching and this faith," he says, "the church, although scattered in the whole world, carefully preserves it as if living in one house" (*Adv. Haer.* 1.10.3).

For Irenaeus, though, as for Clement of Rome before him and for Acts 20 and I Peter 5, the bishop is synonymous or interchangeable with the presbyter, and this is illustrated in a famous statement he makes concerning the bishop's teaching authority as based on a succession from the apostles: "We should obey those presbyters in the church who have their succession from the apostles, and who, together with succession in the episcopate, have received the assured 'charisma' of truth" (*Adv. Haer.* IV.26.2). Apostolic succession for Irenaeus, as Ware emphasizes, is not a mechanical or quasi-magical way of ensuring the preservation of "valid" sacraments, but, rather, its purpose is to preserve the continuity of apostolic doctrine and, understood in this sense, is not something that the bishop enjoys as a personal possession in isolation from the local community and place where he presides. It does seem significant that, when Irenaeus constructs his succession lists, like Hegesippus his contemporary in the mid second century and like Eusebius of Caesarea in the early fourth century, he does not trace the succession through the consecrators of each bishop, as is often done today, but through the throne or seat or see of each Christian community in each place. Irenaeus says: "We can enumerate those who were established by the apostles as bishops in the churches, and their successors down to our time," and he refers next to "those whom the apostles left as their successors, to whom they handed over their own teaching position" (*Adv. Haer.* 111.3). He also says, "We appeal to that tradition which has come down from the apostles and is guarded by the successions of presbyters [here, as before, synonymous with bishops] in the churches" (*Adv. Haer.* 11.2). And again, "What if there should be a dispute about some matter of moderate importance? Should we not turn to the oldest churches, where the apostles themselves were known, and find out from them the clear and certain answer to the problem now being raised? Even if the apostles had not left their writings to us, ought we not to follow the rule of the tradition which they handed down to those to whom they committed the churches?" (*Adv. Haer.* IV!).

The same concept, we may remark, is also found in Tertullian, writing about the same time and also confronting the Gnostic crisis, although he does add the notion of a succession in ordination. He says of the Gnostics: "Let them produce the original records of their churches. Let them unfold the roll of their bishops, running down in due succession from the beginning in such

a manner as that first bishop of theirs shall be able to show for his ordainer and predecessor some one of the apostles or of apostolic men" (*De Prescriptione Hereticorum* 3.2).

It is also worth noting that the concept of "succession" in the ministry of bishops comes earliest in the First Epistle of St. Clement of Rome, c. 96 A.D. (rediscovered to the West only in the seventeenth century). There the understanding is the more rudimentary one of a retrospective linear historical succession of persons by appointment, as Zizioulas observes, rather than the succession in teaching first emphasized by Irenaeus and Tertullian or the eschatological approach to succession found in Ignatius of Antioch. Clement writes: "The apostles also knew, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that there would be strife over the question of the bishop's office. Therefore, for this reason,...they appointed the aforesaid persons and later made further provision that if they should fall asleep other approved men should succeed to their ministry" (I Cor. 44). And he further explains his view that the succession is of persons by appointment: "The apostles received the Gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus the Christ was sent from God, and the apostles from Christ" (I Cor. 42).

5. The Witness of St. Cyprian of Carthage to the Bishop as Leader in the Councils of the Church and the Bond of Administrative Unity between Each Local Church and All the Others

It remains to treat, rather more briefly, the witness of St. Cyprian of Carthage, who died in 258 A.D., which constitutes the third emphasis or model of episcopal ministry from the preNicene period. Cyprian was a bishop who gave such priority to his function of administrative governance that he was even willing to flee persecution and the prospect of martyrdom with his own people around the year 250, and later to re-admit the lapsed, in order to continue from a safe distance his episcopal administration and to preserve the unity of the church under his oversight. For him the offices of bishop and presbyter are distinct and not interchangeable, and he is also the first Christian writer to portray the three orders as sequential or cumulative. Like Ignatius, he speaks of the local church as assembled around the altar with the bishop as its eucharistic president, and in one respect his concept of apostolicity is even stronger than that of Irenaeus, going so far as to identify the bishops with the apostles ("*apostolos, id est episcopus*": Letter 3.3.1).

Cyprian's view of episcopal succession is a noteworthy development from those of Ignatius, Clement, Tertullian, and Irenaeus, for it is a succession by means of consecration, or rather, a succession of episcopal authority handed down by means of ordination. In his view bishops were directly instituted and consecrated by the apostles who were themselves consecrated by Christ. "Hence by means of a chain of succession through time ("*per temporum et successionum vices*") the ordination of bishops and the structure ("*ratio*") of the church has flowed on so that the church is built upon bishops and every act of the church is controlled by these same superiors" ("*praepositos*"), he writes, even referring to "all those placed in charge who have succeeded to the apostles by delegated ordination" (Letters 33.1.1, 66.4.2). What constitutes a bishop for Cyprian, then, is ordination, followed by occupancy of the episcopal chair ("*cathedra*") and supervisory responsibility ("*episcopatus*") over a flock of people ("*plebs*"). (cf. Letters 44.1.1, 45.3.1, 48.4.1). Here we see, clearly, in the way in which he treats both succession and ordination, his emphasis upon the episcopal authority necessary for the administrative governance and good ordering necessary for the church to survive in time. And his stress on the need for unity with one's bishop echoes Ignatius of Antioch: "The church is the people united to the bishop, the flock clinging to its shepherd. From this you should know that the bishop is in the

church and the church in the bishop" ("*Episcopus in ecclesia et ecclesia in episcopo*": Letter 66.8.3). Even more, to be "in communion" with one's bishop is to be "in communion with the Catholic Church" (Letter 55.1.2).

Cyprian's primary emphasis, thus, is upon the bishop as the bond of unity between the local church and the church universal; indeed, he is the author of the earliest surviving treatise on the nature of the church: *De Unitate Ecclesiae*. In this context, he stresses the conciliar or collegial character of the worldwide episcopate, of bishops meeting in council and together reaching a common mind under the Spirit's guidance, and so he calls our attention to this conciliar and collegial feature of any episcopate that would claim to be truly "historic," a feature that has its more recent parallel, for Anglicans, in the worldwide Lambeth Conference of bishops that has met at periodic intervals since the year 1867. And to the question of how bishops should make decisions in such meetings, Cyprian replies that it is not numbers but concord that matters: "the greatest significance is not given to numbers but to the harmony of those who pray" ("*Non multitudini sed unanimitati deprecantium plurimum tribui*": *De Unitate Ecclesiae* 12). He summarized this principle of the conciliar solidarity of the episcopate in a phrase the meaning of which is much debated: "The episcopate is a single whole, of which each bishop has a right to and a responsibility for the whole" ("*Episcopatus unus est, cuius a singulis in solidum pars tenetur*": *De Unitate* 5). Each bishop, in other words (Ware suggests, and I agree), shares in the one episcopate, not as having part of the whole but as being an expression of the whole; just as there are many local churches but only one universal church, so there are many individual bishops but only one worldwide episcopate. His meaning is not, however, as simple as a statement that "the whole is made up of the sum of the individual parts." The bishop, though, is the bond of unity between each local church and all the others, and this is his emphasis. He makes his point another way when he says: "There is one church throughout the whole world divided by Christ into many members, also one episcopate diffused in a harmonious multitude of many bishops" (Letter 55.24.2).

As for those bishops who deny this unity by insisting on their own teachings or actions even to the point of schism, Cyprian declares: "He, therefore, who observes neither the unity of the Spirit nor the bond of peace, and separates himself from the bond of the church and from the college of the bishops, can have neither the power nor the honor of a bishop since he has not wished either the unity or the peace of the episcopate" (Letter 55.24.2). And in a way that could not anticipate the questions raised in our time by the existence of suffragan or auxiliary bishops and of overlapping jurisdictions in full communion, Cyprian expounds the Lord's words in John 10: 16 "There shall be one flock and one shepherd" by stating his own maxim: "A number of shepherds or of flocks in one place is unthinkable" (*De Unitate* 8). Thus, Cyprian's doctrine of episcopal collegiality is directly linked to his doctrine of the church, as he summarizes: "It is particularly incumbent upon those of us who preside over the church as bishops to uphold this unity firmly and to be its champions, so that we may prove the episcopate also to be itself one and undivided" (*De Unitate* 5).

The bishop's ministry for the good ordering of the church is also related, in Cyprian's letters, to the bishop's personal role as an exemplar and living standard of conduct: "In proportion as the fall of a bishop is an event which tends ruinously to the fall of his followers, so on the other hand it is useful and salutary when a bishop shows himself to the brethren as one to be imitated in the strength of faith" (Letter 9.1.2). "May the Lord who condescends to elect and to appoint for himself bishops in his church protect those chosen and also appointed by his will and assistance, inspiring them in their government and supplying both vigor for restraining the insolence of the

wicked and mildness for nourishing the repentance of the lapsed" (Letter 48.4.2). "While the bond of concord remains, and the undivided sacrament of the Catholic Church endures, every bishop disposes and directs his own acts, and will have to give an account of his purposes to the Lord" (Letter 55.21.2).

6. Conclusions

Thus we have seen three complementary, but not contradictory, models or emphases of episcopal ministry in the early Christian church, in the writings of 1) Sts. Ignatius of Antioch and Hippolytus of Rome, 2) St. Irenaeus of Lyons, and 3) St. Cyprian of Carthage. These three models emphasize, respectively, the roles of the bishop as 1) eucharistic president, 2) chief teacher, and 3) administrative leader. They also present three different models of church unity, each *focused* upon the bishop and again complementary rather than contradictory: 1) eucharistic unity, 2) doctrinal unity, and 3) administrative unity. And, finally, they present three complementary pictures of the primary ministry of a bishop: 1) one who presides over the eucharistic unity of each local church, 2) the link in time between each local church and the teaching of the apostles, and 3) the bond across space for the unity of each local church with all the others. It is also possible that these three models, or emphases, or pictures, bear some relationship to the classical description of the work of Christ as 1) Priest (Ignatius and Hippolytus), 2) Prophet (Irenaeus), and 3) King (Cyprian).

Several questions for discussion arise out of the early evidence, and to list them is, of course, by no means to solve them: 1) Can we place the early patristic development upon a level of authority equal to that of, or even greater than, the evidence of the New Testament (which is admittedly rather sparse)? 2) What weight of authority should we give today to the qualifications for episcopal office established in I Timothy 3:1-7 and in Titus 1:7-9? 3) Do we today regard the emergence of the moniscopate at the head of the threefold ministerial office in Ignatius and Hippolytus as necessary? as irreversible? 4) Do we regard the distinction of episcopate from presbyterate as essential, in spite of their interchangeability in Acts 20, I Peter 5, I Clement, and Irenaeus? 5) Given the absence of any evidence for the prescription of cumulative orders before the work of Cyprian, do we regard this development as necessary and irreversible, or only as normative or even indifferent? 6) Given the evidence for popular choice of bishops in the earliest ordination rites, those of Hippolytus, what judgment should we make upon other methods for appointment of bishops by rulers, popes, patriarchs, or synods of bishops? 7) Are the five different concepts of episcopal/apostolic succession that we have encountered all complementary and capable of synthesis, or should one or more of them be given a higher weight of authority: eschatological (Ignatius), retrospective/linear/historical (Clement), doctrinal (Irenaeus), ordination (Tertullian and Hippolytus), and authoritative/administrative (Cyprian)? 8) Is the indelibility of Holy Orders, and in particular the life tenure of episcopal ordination, which does not seem to be mentioned in this early evidence apart from Clement of Rome's remark that the apostles made provision that if those whom they appointed "should fall asleep other approved men should succeed to their ministry," nonetheless an essential and constitutive ingredient of what might be called the "historic" episcopate? 9) To what extent are the three major emphases outlined in this paper, as well as the differing concepts of episcopal/apostolic succession and other differences concerning interchangeability, cumulative orders, indelibility, and the like, mainly attributable to geographical differences, such as Antioch and Asia Minor, Syria, Rome, and North Africa, and thus reflective of an inculturation or cultural differentiation that was perhaps more readily tolerated in this early period than today? 10) "What are the emphases, or functions, of episcopal ministry in our current liturgical texts, and how do they correspond to the

classical evidence of episcopal ministry that comes from the New Testament and from Ignatius and Hippolytus, Irenaeus, and Cyprian? 11) Are there other functions of bishops today more important than any of the three that have been highlighted in this essay? 12) "What are, and what should be, the major emphases or functions in episcopal ministry today?"

Three: The Episcopal Church and the Historic Episcopate Today

One of the self-discoveries of the Episcopal Church in its dialogue with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was that the Episcopal Church has no official definition of the historic episcopate, other than the statement in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, point 4, which I assume you have already covered historically in this dialogue. We consider that it must be a "given" in any ecumenical agreement for full communion, both linking us to the apostolic faith of the early church and at the same time pointing us towards the coming great church of the future. We do not, however, unchurch those churches who do not yet stand in that succession, and we, probably too readily, assume that our own practice about episcopacy must be the only correct interpretation of the matter. In the document *Called to Common Mission* (1999; hereafter CCM), the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America agreed, and I paraphrase here, "to include regularly one or more bishops of the other church to participate in the laying-on-of-hands at the ordinations of their own bishops as a sign, though not a guarantee, of the unity and apostolic continuity of the whole church. With the laying-on-of-hands by other bishops, such ordinations will involve prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Both churches will value and maintain a ministry of episkope as one of the ways, in the context of other ordained ministries and of the whole people of God, in which the apostolic succession of the church is visibly expressed and personally symbolized in fidelity to the gospel through the ages. By such a liturgical statement the churches recognize that the bishop serves the diocese or synod through ties of collegiality and consultation that strengthen its links with the universal church. It is also a liturgical expression of our full communion, calling for mutual planning and common mission in each place. We agree that when persons duly called and elected are ordained in this way, they are understood to join bishops already in this succession and thus to enter the historic episcopate." (CCM 12, paraphrase). This is, now and currently, just about the closest thing the Episcopal Church has to any official definition expanding what we mean by the phrase "historic episcopate." The third and final section of this paper therefore now turns to the substance of what I and other Episcopalians tended to say about historic episcopacy in our dialogue with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, how we explained it.

The unofficial definition of historic episcopate that we developed in our dialogue with the Lutherans, which I believe does resonate with what the Episcopal Church tends to believe about it, went something like the following. The historic episcopate is one important strand in the apostolicity of the church. It is a sign of the church's intention to remain faithful to the apostolic teaching and mission of the gospel, at the same time that it is also a sign of the final ingathering of all of God's humanity foretold in Matthew 19:28. It is a succession of bishops or church leaders whose roots are planted in the time of the early church, pointing back to the centrality of Christ and the teaching of the apostles, and to such other strands of apostolicity as the biblical canon, the creeds and councils, and the sacraments, while at the same time pointing forward in order to oversee, or superintend, or give leadership to, the mission of the church today. In the

words of the 1982 Lima statement on Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry from the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, representative of widespread international agreement and whose director at that time was an American Lutheran, the historic episcopate is "a sign though not a guarantee," in personal terms, of the unity and continuity of the church's faith throughout time and space. It points towards a unity of the church, a communion of churches, that is greater than any one denomination or local judicature, at the same time that it points toward the spiritual, missiological, and doctrinal continuity of the church of today with the church of the ages. It is still accepted and practiced by some three-fourths of the world's Christians and is the only ministerial institution that exists to promote the unity and mutual responsibility of the worldwide church.

The Episcopal Church believes that this sign, this teaching about the historic episcopate, with its ancient roots and global expression, is (in the words of our 1982 General Convention) "essential to the reunion of the church" even though we do not believe it is necessary to salvation nor a condition for recognizing the churchly character of other churches. The historic episcopate is conveyed by installing or ordaining a new bishop by prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit with the laying on of hands by at least three other bishops already sharing in the historic episcopate, there being at least three as testimony that something more than local interest is involved in the ministry of oversight or episkope within the church. This belief, which was early expressed in the first ecumenical council of Nicaea (325), Episcopalians share with other churches of the "catholic" family, such as the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholics, although unlike them we do not attach to the historic episcopate a mandate of celibacy or an exclusion of the ordination of women (an exclusion which, according to Cardinal Ratzinger, is "infallibly taught"). And although we agree with those churches that we would not enter full communion with a church that does not have it, we do not insist that churches with whom we enter full communion must require it of others. We do not seek to condemn the past of those churches who since the Reformation have been without it, but it is our conviction that the full visible unity of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church for the future, of which it is a sign, will not come about apart from it. We believe that it will be an obvious and normative ingredient to a common Christian life in the future. All this, we believe, is a reasonable ecumenical interpretation or adaptation of an institution that has stood the test of time but also, we would agree, has like all institutions become somewhat ossified and is always in need of renewal. We understand the bishop in this way to be a visible and symbolic (although human and imperfect) sign of the presence of the Good Shepherd among us, as well as a personal means of connecting the diocese or synod that he or she serves to the wider church, of representing more than local interest groups, effecting communication and pointing beyond the narrow boundaries of parochialism to connect us to other dioceses, countries, continents, and cultures.

Placed in broader context, we believe that the episcopate is founded upon the mission and ministry of the whole people of God, the only reasons why the CCM said rather less about the mission and ministry of all the baptized being that Lutherans and Episcopalians had never seriously disagreed on that point and much of it was already covered in earlier stages of the dialogue. Our lay people are already reconciled by their baptisms, which is another significant ingredient of apostolicity, but the remaining problem not yet settled, as the foundation document of CUIC also points out, is with the ordinations of clergy, which of course is related to the historic episcopate.

Next, a few words about the history of the American Episcopal Church, its struggles to maintain the historic episcopate which our Anglican tradition inherited with the Reformation, but especially about our American struggles to free the historic episcopate from what seemed to us the pomposity and bureaucracy of the temporal and political connections by which it was entangled in the British establishment of that day. You have other historians in your dialogue from both churches who know this story as well as I or probably better, but I shall summarize the story as it unfolded in our dialogue with the Lutherans, and that story begins with one basic fact. It is remarkable that after the American Revolution colonial Anglicanism survived at all, associated as it was with the tyranny of British rule. There were no resident Anglican bishops in early America, and the colonists at first opposed any suggestion of episcopacy, which they linked with "proud prelacy" in England. The 1789 founding convention of the Episcopal Church, which met in Philadelphia, finally resolved that the historic ordained ministry was to be retained, although the bishops were to be elected by both clergy and laity, not appointed by the crown or subject to it. It provided that both clergy and laity were to share in the government of the church at diocesan conventions and in General Convention, and that the national structures of our church would be rather minimal and therefore hopefully less tempted to domination from above. Though consonant with conciliar patterns in the early church, such changes in the structure, practice, and understanding of episcopacy from England were influenced by American colonial experience as well as by a positive evaluation of American federal governmental philosophy and practice at that time, the Articles of Confederation being of particular influence. Collectively, these arrangements in the Episcopal Church have come to be known as "the constitutional episcopate," enabling bishops to fulfill their particular historic functions within and on behalf of the community of the faithful but not above or apart from it. The preface to our very first Book of Common Prayer (1789/90), still authoritative today, did confirm that we were (and are) "far from intending to depart from the Church of England in any essential point of doctrine, discipline, or worship," but one should note that it binds us only to the essential points (which are, cleverly, not identified) and then adds "or further than local circumstances require," thus leaving room for us to distance ourselves from the secondary trappings (from our perspective) that had accrued to episcopacy in the Church of England. And in 1792 this same phraseology entered the Ordinal of our Prayer Book in the public oath of conformity required of bishops-elect, replacing the oath of allegiance to the archbishop that was required in the Church of England. Although we remember Samuel Seabury as our very first bishop, it was William White, first Bishop of Pennsylvania, who was the central figure of the Episcopal Church in its first half-century. It was White who developed a practical model of episcopacy and of the office of Presiding Bishop, of which he was the first distinguished occupant, and it was he who skillfully transferred and adapted the principles of episcopacy inherited from the English reformation to the new world in which the Episcopal Church was born. Since the Revolutionary War in the late 18th century the development of American Anglicanism has produced in the Episcopal Church distinctive characteristics in four areas:

- 1) Episcopate: For us the powers of bishops are defined and limited by a written constitution, and our bishops are elected by both clerical and lay delegates rather than as in England appointed by the crown in a complicated process that involves the church's own choice only at an early stage. In the catechism of our latest (1979) Book of Common Prayer we describe the particular ministry of a bishop in this way: "to represent Christ and his Church,

particularly as apostle, chief priest, and pastor of a diocese; to guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the whole Church; to proclaim the Word of God; to act in Christ's name for the reconciliation of the world and the building up of the Church; and to ordain others to continue Christ's ministry." We also have authoritative catechetical descriptions of the particular ministries of laity and of other clergy, all of whom are seen as "representing Christ and his Church" each in different but collaborative ways, just as we believe that in Christ's one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church "every member has, in virtue of his or her own baptism, his or her special vocation and ministry." The church is linked to the apostles both by Baptism and by ordination in the historic episcopate.

2) Authority: We maintain our own representative system of church government independent of the English Parliament. Constitutionally, our General Convention, involving both clergy and laity, has final authority for us. We do not seek to be an established church, and most Episcopalians would probably be content to see the establishment terminated in England. If something is good and true, we would say, it will flourish best if it is allowed to be freely accepted and not imposed.

3) Finance: We depend largely upon voluntary financial support, rather than drawing, as the Church of England still does in part, upon ancient ecclesiastical endowments that can too easily allow the clergy to be independent of lay support.

4) Mission: Our Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society was re-organized in 1835 to include every one of our members, thus defining still today our entire church as itself a missionary society, even though we do not always live up to this ideal. We are probably the most reluctant of all major churches in the area of evangelism, largely because we emphatically do not believe in proselytism and are quite reluctant to seek converts from any other church. In Russia, for example, our policy is to help the oldest church that is already there, rather than to send our missionaries to convert Russians who have not had a chance to even hear their own Orthodox church for some 75 years. In Africa, on the other hand, where there are multitudes who have not yet heard the good news of the gospel, Anglicanism is growing fast thanks to its non-proselytizing evangelism.

After much intervening history, in the late nineteenth century the first and enduring principles of unity were generated on which the Episcopal Church, and for that matter the entire Anglican Communion of Churches over all the world in their various local adaptations, still stand. These principles date formally from the years 1886-1888 and are collectively called the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, originating with our House of Bishops meeting at Chicago in 1886 and then endorsed in slightly different form by the worldwide meeting of Anglican bishops at Lambeth, the London residence of the archbishop of Canterbury, in 1888. This Quadrilateral, as you probably know, enumerates four points or articles upon which Anglican churches believe agreement is necessary for a basis of an approach to ecumenical reunion with other churches: the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, the gospel sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist as instituted by Christ and generally necessary to salvation, and the historic episcopate "locally adapted in the methods of its administration." Historians will here recognize in these four points a similarity to the developments that are sometimes called the institutional marks of early catholicism, as the growing church of the patristic period sought by

these very means to spread the gospel in the Roman Empire and beyond as well as to define itself over against the heresies of Gnosticism. These four points also constitute what many theologians would say are the major strands of apostolicity, and the obvious evangelistic potential of these four points is still available today. It was probably all of this that led the compilers of the Quadrilateral at Chicago in 1886 to affirm what they called "the principles of unity exemplified by the undivided Catholic Church during the first ages of its existence."

Generally, the Lambeth Conferences as well as successive triennial General Conventions of the Episcopal Church in the USA have continued to affirm and have refused to replace or even significantly alter this Quadrilateral as the fundamental Anglican consensus for full communion or full church fellowship with other churches that are not Anglican. The Quadrilateral is, for example, the basis for our relationships of full communion with the Old Catholic Churches as well as for our ecumenical discussions with Lutherans and all other churches. Its four points, one should note, are described as a basis for an approach, a beginning not an ending, a terminus a quo not a terminus ad quem. And within the Quadrilateral Episcopalians would see the fourth point of the historic episcopate as a sign or personification, even a means of personal transmission, of the other three points or marks or strands of apostolicity--the scriptures, creeds, and sacraments. To claim the historic episcopate is to say that we intend to live in visible continuity with this heritage, to claim it and appreciate it.

It was the dream and hope of William Reed Huntington, the Quadrilateral's founder, rector of Grace Church on Broadway in New York City, and the most distinguished priest in the Episcopal church at the turn of the nineteenth century into the twentieth, that these four principles could serve as a foundation to unite all or most of American protestant Christianity. Writing in the spirit of American confidence that was celebrating a newly found national unity in the years since the Civil War's end in 1865, Huntington saw the need for the Episcopal Church in this country "to strip Anglicanism of the picturesque costume which English life has thrown around it," which he in rather colorful language pictured as "a flutter of surplices, a vision of village spires and cathedral towers, a somewhat stiff and stately company of deans, prebendaries, and choristers, and that is about all." Huntington went on to remark, in his book that originated the Quadrilateral, *The Church-Idea* (1870): "If our whole ambition as Anglicans in America be to continue a small but eminently respectable body of Christians, and to offer a refuge to people of refinement and sensibility, who are shocked by the irreverences they are apt to encounter elsewhere; in a word, if we care to be only a countercheck and not a force in society; then let us say as much in plain terms, and frankly renounce any and all claim to Catholicity. We have only, in such a case, to wrap the robe of our dignity about us, and walk quietly along in a seclusion no one will take much trouble to disturb. Thus may we be a Church in name, and a sect in deed. But if we aim at something nobler than this, if we would have our Communion become national in very truth,--in other words, if we would bring the Church of Christ into the closest possible sympathy with the throbbing, sorrowing, sinning, repenting, aspiring heart of this great people,--then let us press our reasonable claims to be the reconciler of a divided household, not in a spirit of arrogance (which ill befits those whose best possessions have come to them by inheritance), but with affectionate earnestness and an intelligent zeal." From such motivation William Reed Huntington, greatest of all American Episcopalian ecumenists, crafted and presented the Quadrilateral's four points. He was also a leading figure in Prayer Book revision and vocal advocate of a greatly enhanced and almost-equal place for

women in the church of that day, and his memory and ecumenical vision is now commemorated annually in a service at Grace Church.

The Lambeth Conference of 1920 described Huntington's legacy, our ideal of church unity, in this way: "The vision which rises before us is that of a Church, genuinely Catholic, loyal to all truth, and gathering into its fellowship all 'who profess and call themselves Christians,' within whose visible unity all the treasures of faith and order, bequeathed as a heritage by the past to the present, shall be possessed in common, and made serviceable to the whole Body of Christ. Within this unity Christian Communion now separated from one another would retain much that has long been distinctive in their methods of worship and service. It is through a rich diversity of life and devotion that the unity of the whole fellowship will be fulfilled." Enumerating and expanding upon the points of the Quadrilateral, it concluded with "A ministry acknowledged by every part of the Church as possessing not only the inward call of the Spirit, but also the commission of Christ and the authority of the whole body." The conference then asked: "May we not reasonably claim that the Episcopate is the one means of providing such a ministry? It is not that we call in question for a moment the spiritual reality of the ministries of those Communion which do not possess the Episcopate. On the contrary, we thankfully acknowledge that these ministries have been manifestly blessed and owned by the Holy Spirit as effective means of grace. But we submit that considerations alike of history and of present experience justify the claim which we make on behalf of the Episcopate."

The Lambeth report of 1958 made this vision from 1920 even more explicit: "Loyalty to the age-long tradition of the Church, and to our own experience, compels us to believe that a ministry to be acknowledged by every part of the Church can only be attained through the historic episcopate, though not necessarily in the precise form prevailing in any part of the Anglican Communion. This ministry we believe to have been given to the Church by Divine Providence from primitive Christian times with its traditional functions of pastoral care and oversight, ordination, leadership in worship, and teaching. We fully recognize that there are other forms of ministry than episcopacy in which have been revealed the gracious activity of God in the life of the universal Church. We believe that other Churches have often borne more effective witness, for example, to the status and vocation of the laity as spiritual persons and to the fellowship and discipline of congregational life than has been done in some of the Churches of our communion. It is our longing that all the spiritual gifts and insights by which the particular Churches live to God's glory may find their full scope and enrichment in a united Church." All this is to indicate our belief that the reunion of the churches will simply not occur without a ministry recognized by all of them and that only a ministry in the apostolic succession of the historic episcopate stands any chance of achieving such universal recognition. Our insistence on the historic episcopate thus has to do with the contextual necessities of a movement toward a common and wider Christian life. It is for this reason that the Episcopal Church will come to see the historic episcopate, as I shall explain in a moment, as "essential to the reunion of the church" and therefore in this sense, but only in this sense, as a "condition."

The Quadrilateral's first three points (scriptures, creeds, and the dominical sacraments) we share in common with many protestant churches, but its fourth point, the historic episcopate, we share primarily with the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches, although they both would insist that it be restricted to men who are celibate. Although we would regard all four

points of the Quadrilateral as together constituting a charter of "catholicity," as constituting the major strands of "apostolicity," the absence of this fourth point in most churches of the protestant tradition has meant that attention has somewhat narrowly focused upon it as our link with "catholicity" whereas the other three are seen as our links, or bridges, to evangelical protestantism. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in its official statement on ecumenism, says that it seek links in both directions, even "full communion" (the official term used), and presumably this is why Lutherans, having entered full communion with us, also continue in dialogue with the Roman Catholics and Orthodox.

The 1982 General Convention of the Episcopal Church reassessed the relation of the historic episcopate to the concept of apostolicity, especially as a result of our ecumenical dialogues with the Lutheran churches, and it came up with the following adaptation, which is the origin of our phraseology "essential to the reunion of the church" that I mentioned earlier:

"Apostolicity is evidenced in continuity with the teaching, the ministry, and the mission of the apostles. Apostolic teaching must, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, be founded upon the Holy Scriptures and the ancient fathers and creeds, making its proclamation of Jesus Christ and his gospel for each new age consistent with those sources, not merely reproducing them in a transmission of verbal identity. Apostolic ministry exists to promote, safeguard and serve apostolic teaching. All Christians are called to this ministry by their Baptism. In order to serve, lead and enable this ministry, some are set apart and ordained in the historic orders of Bishop, Presbyter, and Deacon. We understand the historic episcopate as central to this apostolic ministry and essential to the reunion of the Church, even as we acknowledge 'the spiritual reality of the ministries of those Communities which do not possess the Episcopate' [quoted from the Lambeth Conference of 1920]. Apostolic mission is itself a succession of apostolic teaching and ministry inherited from the past and carried into the present and future. Bishops in apostolic succession are, therefore, the focus and personal symbols of this inheritance and mission as they preach and teach the gospel and summon the people of God to their mission of worship and service." We may note, as regards this important position statement voted by the General Convention of 1982, that Apostolic teaching is drawn from the heritage of the past, especially from the Bible, that Apostolic mission looks to carry this heritage into the future, and that Apostolic ministry, especially the historic episcopate, is seen as "central" in holding it all together and the historic episcopate as "essential" to the reunion of the entire Church (but not as essential to salvation nor as necessary for recognizing the ecclesial character of other churches). And thus, although we do not see the historic episcopate as something required by the gospel, we do regard it as a matter of faith, as being something more than a mere structural adiaphoron.

The statement of our General Convention of 1982, I should add, also needs to be seen in the context of the agreed and official ordination rite for a bishop in our latest (1979) Book of Common Prayer. The bishop-elect is described as chosen by the clergy and people of the diocese to be their bishop and chief pastor, and he or she then declares under oath that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God and contain all things necessary to salvation. Following this the bishop-elect promises to conform to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Episcopal Church, and then the people are invited to declare openly whether or not it is their will that this person be ordained a bishop (Very occasionally there are some loud NO's!). Then, after readings from the Scriptures, there follows the the section called the "examination," which is solemnly

read in public before the consecration of every new bishop and constitutes our own modern re-statement of the traditional prophetic, priestly, and governing functions that have historically characterized the episcopate since the time of such writers as Ignatius, Irenaeus, and Cyprian in the early church. Each of the three paragraphs, one after another, can be related to leadership and oversight in proclamation, worship, and governance, taking their historic roots in these three authors:

"The people have chosen you and have affirmed their trust in you by acclaiming your election. A bishop in God's holy Church is called to be one with the apostles in proclaiming Christ's resurrection and interpreting the gospel, and to testify to Christ's sovereignty as Lord of lords and King of kings.

"You are called to guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church; to celebrate and to provide for the administration of the sacraments of the New Covenant; to ordain priests and deacons and to join in ordaining bishops; and to be in all things a faithful pastor and wholesome example for the entire flock of Christ.

"With your fellow bishops you will share in the leadership of the Church throughout the world. Your heritage is the faith of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and those of every generation who have looked to God in hope. Your joy will be to follow him who came, not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

After these paragraphs the examination continues with public questions in which the bishop-elect promises to be faithful in prayer and in the study of Holy Scripture, to boldly proclaim and interpret the gospel, to encourage and support all baptized people in their gifts and ministries, to guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the church, to share in the governance of the church, and to be merciful to all, showing compassion to the poor and strangers and defending those who have no helper. The bishop-elect is then required to lead the congregation in reciting the Nicene Creed, as the Presiding Bishop says "We therefore call upon you, chosen to be a guardian of the Church's faith, to lead us in confessing that faith." And immediately after the prayer for consecration of the bishop, which in our American Prayer Book is drawn from the earliest form of such a prayer in the western church, that is, Hippolytus, the new bishop is given a Bible in order to state publicly that the authority of his or her episcopal ministry is to be discharged under the Holy Scriptures.

Still one other context in which our understanding of historic episcopacy must be seen is that of our official canon law, whereby it is stipulated that every bishop-elect, once chosen by his or her diocese, must also receive the approval of the wider church. Under our Canon 22, sections 3-5, of Title III, this must be signified by the affirmative consents of a majority of all Bishops exercising jurisdiction and of all diocesan Standing Committees, or by majority votes of both houses of our General Convention if the bishop's election occurred within 120 days thereof. Of the former of these procedures, Bishops-elect not confirmed by majorities of Bishops and Standing Committees, I am not aware of any statistical record; but of the latter eventuality, where a Bishop-elect fails to receive the necessary votes at a General Convention, I am aware of nine such cases. This procedure therefore is one way in which, at least in our canon law, there is provision to ensure that new bishops are representative of more than mere local interests.

My summary has nearly ended as to what the Episcopal Church officially believes about the historic episcopate that it has struggled so hard to maintain. It is sometimes said that "Anglicans have no one understanding of the historic episcopate that is required of all Anglicans," but this is true only in a limited sense since Episcopalians do in fact have an accumulated official doctrinal belief about it that is contained within and can be derived from our Book of Common Prayer, the resolutions of Lambeth Conferences, our canon law, and the acts of our General Conventions. All of those pertinent passages I have now endeavored to cite. For us it is a matter of faith and not just a structural adiaphoron. And I should add that we did not start out in the Lutheran-Episcopal dialogue urging Lutherans to receive the historic episcopate from us, to become Episcopalians, as some have unfairly complained; it was the Lutheran representatives then who honestly thought that would be the better recommendation. The Episcopal Church claims no exclusive "corner" or "market" on the historic episcopate, from the very first we said we thought it would be better for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to receive it from other Lutheran churches under the Augsburg Confession who already stand within it, and we certainly defend Lutheran freedom to work out an evangelical expression of it that the ELCA can live with, which they are obviously doing.

Still one other remark seems appropriate as this paper concludes. The many years of dialogue process leading up to the CCM and full communion with the Lutherans also enabled us in the Episcopal Church, even forced us, to consider which aspects of the historic episcopate as we have known it in later twentieth century America are things of the first order, and which aspects we could be prepared and content not necessarily to expect to see in the historic episcopate of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in full communion with us. Lutherans understandably wanted to know just what they would be taking on in such an arrangement; concerned lest the vitality of their "people's church" be constrained and their "indigenous evangelical imagination" be stifled. Most of the things we would consider essential I have already mentioned, and the revised CCM covers them all. Obviously we do not consider it essential to the historic episcopate that the bishop be a celibate male, as the Roman Catholics and the Orthodox do, nor that the bishop must be a monk and grow a beard, as do the Orthodox. Coming nearer to home, we do not consider it essential to the historic episcopate that every bishop or diocese must have a cathedral church, or that the bishop should wear a ring and a cross and a cope and mitre and march last in the procession and sit high upon a throne or carry a crozier or be styled "The Right Reverend" or wear a purple shirt or, for that matter, wear clericals at all, or even draw a larger salary than the other clergy! All these things are commonly encountered in the Episcopal Church today, but they are not regarded by us as in any way essential to the historic episcopate. We have at least one living bishop who has never worn a mitre on his head, and there was a period a couple of centuries ago when none of them did. We have some dioceses without cathedrals, and early on, most of them in this country did not. We recently had one bishop whose "throne" was a folding stool that he carried in his car, calling his "cathedral" any building in which he unfolded it, and we had one new diocese that decided to begin its life only with a bishop and not with any of the peripherals or with any diocesan offices or administration unless or until it agreed that it needed them for the sake of the church's mission in its own locale and culture. (That diocese did pay the bishop a large salary, though!). I should add that one function of the bishop as we understand it is precisely to call the church beyond its own culture at times, to speak prophetically in relation to other cultures and countries and races,

to be cross-cultural as well as enculturated, and perhaps, in the name of the gospel, at times to be counter-cultural. And yet we also support the rights of the laity to speak their considered Christian minds in public as well, even in contradiction of the pronouncements of our bishops, as the first President Bush did in disagreeing with our Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning over the Persian Gulf War, or, as much earlier in England, Thomas Becket did against King Henry II.